



SIMPSON DESERT

Hike to Help Jenny's Place

Central Australia 15 AUG–7 SEP 2022



Get ready to go
wild hiking the
Simpson Desert!



Information Pack

Your participation in this hike will help empower women to take control of their lives and build a better future after domestic violence.

VISIT...

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Hike to Help Jenny's Place... Simpson Desert

15th August to 6th September, 2022

22 days, 440km, 1100 sand dunes

**All while raising funds and bringing awareness to Jenny's Place
who assist women and children escaping domestic violence
and at risk of homelessness**

Welcome to our *"Hike to Help Jenny's Place ... Simpson Desert Crossing"* in 2022.

If you would like to challenge yourself by taking on this awesome, once in a lifetime Trek and you are keen to help out Jenny's Place, please read the below information which has been provided to us by the Trekking Company leading this Trek.

This Trek for Jenny's Place is going to be a cracker of a trip. It will have its moments when you think "what am I doing here" and then there will be the golden ones when you are sitting on top of a dune, full moon at sunset and not a soul in sight! Whilst the following is a fairly detailed look at the journey's requirements and demands, it is a trip of surprises and adventures.

THE TRACK

Dalhousie Springs is where our base camp will be. This is a beautiful spot with hot springs, lots of wildlife around the lakes and ponds that surround the area. The day spent here is one of final preparation, walks and swimming in the body healing hot springs.

When we start on the western side, the dunes are hardly visible but within 40 km we start to get a little serious and the ground softens up. Firewood is hard to find, we take a reasonable amount into the Desert with us, but we have to be careful with its use.

Wildlife in the area includes camels, foxes, cats and the odd rodent, snakes are very rare, bird life comes and goes.

Whilst walking during the day, I start off with a jacket, scarf and beanie – a bit rugged up really but I ditch it as the day warms up. I wear good fitting cotton undies with bike pants over the top and then long loose lightweight pants. I have a long sleeve shirt on at all times and broad brim hat – this keeps the wind, sun and flies at bay – well sort of!!! I wear Dunlop volleys with a cushion layer inside. I carry about a litre of water, some snacks and a scarf and my camera and then I am set to go.

ITINERARY

- ❖ 15th August we pick everyone up in Alice Springs before sunrise and head to Dalhousie Springs, via Kulgera and Mt Dare - it's a 5 to 6 hour trip. We spend the next day at Dalhousie getting ready, talking, swimming in the warm waters of the hot springs and then blast out over the start line the next day.
- ❖ We start off slow with a 15k day followed by a 20k day and then it's 20 to 25km every day until Poeppel Corner where we have a rest day. From there it's the final charge to Big Red.
- ❖ Just before Poeppel Corner a vehicle will go into Birdsville to pick up supplies. Water for a reasonable wash on our day off at Poeppel Corner will be available.
- ❖ We will spend 20 nights and walk 440km across the Desert to the iconic Big Red at the back of Birdsville, arriving in Birdsville on the 5th September. There will be a couple of drinks (or three) in the Pub that night and a good Pub dinner to finish.
- ❖ As far as the order of when you walk and stop and who you walk with, well that's up to you and it can and probably will change as the days go by. Sometimes it's nice to walk alone with music and nobody with you and sometimes it's good to solve the problems of the world as you walk along with a few others.
- ❖ Mostly we leave the camp by 8 am and arrive at the next camp by 3 pm at the latest. This gives you plenty of time to kick back, relax and enjoy the sheer tranquillity of the Desert, write poetry, meditate maybe and then get ready for dinner which is just after sunset.
- ❖ We would leave Birdsville for Brisbane with Rex aviation on the 6th or 7th September. Whilst we very much try to operate with a set plan and time schedule, this can change due to the nature of this type of adventure. We are very remote and very exposed to the elements - rain and sand storms can be a problem, but are rare.

TYPICAL DAY

Everyone rolls out of their tents somewhere around or just before sunrise. Someone will have gotten up a bit earlier and have the fire going. We will have a leisurely breakfast and then start our hiking day.

For the day's walk you will have either your camelback or at least a 1 litre container of water, maybe some dried fruit and muesli bars, oranges and apples. If it's a 25 km day, we start at around 8.00 am. One vehicle goes ahead 12 km and prepares the first break of tea, coffee and food which is a very welcome sight in the morning after 12 km walked.

You will more than likely start off with a jacket on, however this can be dropped on the track and the tail 4 x 4 will pick it up on the way through. At the first stop we will resupply our water and snacks and after a 20 to 30 minute break, we head off again for another 8 km. We then have another short break and resupply before taking on the last 5 km into camp which will be all set up. All you will have to do upon arrival is put up your tent which takes about 3 minutes. The day's walk will generally finish around 3.00 pm

It's then a nice time until dinner to reflect and get lost in the world. You are in a very peaceful place with every dune, every sunset and every kilometre pretty cool. The first few days are a little tough, but you settle into a rhythm eventually and as long as the legs hang in there, you will make it over yet another sand dune.

CAMP FACILITIES

- ❖ We supply everything other than your personal gear that you will need from Alice Springs to Brisbane via a 21 day walk across the Desert - it's the long way to Brisbane!
- ❖ We give you a new tent with an external solar light and floor mat for the entry, a self-inflating mattress, fly vail, shoulder bag, hand sanitiser and wipes, matches, stainless coffee mug and a fold up chair. We also supply all the necessary eating utensils and whatever it takes to live in our mobile Desert Camp.
- ❖ Putting your tent up takes a few minutes and pulling it down is just as quick. Then you just drop it at the equipment trailer in the morning along with your main gear bags.
- ❖ The toilet is a two-foot deep hole in the top of the dune. Over the hole is a great wood frame dunny with a conventional toilet seat. Generally, it is placed in a spot with a view. Two sides have a privacy wall ...hat scarf or coat on the outside means it's occupied. We will have two of these set up each night. In the morning they are sterilized, the hole filled with hot coals from the fire and back filled with a disinfectant cover. If the need arises during the day whilst walking, duck off to the side of the track, but make sure you have matches to burn the dunny paper. You should always carry dunny paper and a box of matches.
- ❖ We will leave no rubbish at all in the Desert, everything that goes in, comes out and that's why it's important to burn toilet paper, nothing worse than seeing paper floating through the air or tangled in the spinifex.
- ❖ We will have a fire every night, except at Dalhousie Springs and we take the firewood into the Desert with us as taking firewood from National Parks is not permitted.



MEDICAL

- ❖ Blisters are the main problem on these hikes, so be prepared. Use comfy light shoes that are well worn in, along with cotton thin socks near the skin, with a wool blended sock over that - bring several pairs.

- ❖ If you are prone to blisters and are aware of it, bring the necessary repair medicine and bandages. We will have quite a bit of this gear in the main medical box if you run short.
- ❖ A good preventive answer for blisters on the rear end and crutch rub is to wear a pair of reasonable quality bike pants, they are well worth it.
- ❖ We carry a very good medical kit and the crew are first aid trained with detailed emergency evacuation plans in place if needed.

FOOD

Cooking is done on a combination of gas and with camp ovens and bush cooking.

- ❖ Vegetarian/Vegan food is available, just let us know if you require this and also any allergies you may have.
- ❖ **Breakfast:** Cereals, hot drinks of many kinds, fruit, noodles and soups, damper and spreads.
- ❖ **Lunch stop:** Crackers, cheese, cold meat, damper, spreads, hot drinks, noodles and soups.
- ❖ **Dinner:** Big hot meat meal with either potatoes, rice or pasta. We have 12 different main meals over the course of the Trek and all are served with salad or vegetables. Some samples are Roast Lamb, Beef and Chicken, Chili Con Carne, Beef Stroganoff, Spaghetti Bolognese, Butter Chicken, Creamy Chicken Mushroom, Barbeque, Pork Rogan Josh, Tuna Mornay.
- ❖ Throughout the day you can take: oranges, apples, mixed nut and dried fruit mix, muesli bars, beef jerky.
- ❖ The flies, the flies, the bloody flies.... they can be pretty bad, so fly nets are quite handy and we also try to eat just after they have gone to bed at sunset.
- ❖ We don't supply any alcohol however, if you would like a drink of an evening, I would suggest when in Alice Springs you get 2-litre cardboard wine casks. Sorry but bottles are a definite no go and chilling of drinks will not be available.

PREPARATION

- ❖ Now getting fit for this should not be a real hassle. If you are keen to do such a trip in the start, you are more than likely quite fit anyway.
- ❖ The key points are your shoes and socks and maybe use bike pants.
- ❖ If you are NOT an experienced walker then I would be starting off by doing 3 to 5 km walks mostly on flat surfaces 5 or 6 times a week. Get into a routine and use your Camelback. Do your training in what you are going to be wearing on the trip, - shoes,

socks, pants, etc. Bike pants are a good way to reduce rubbing. Don't rush the walk, just a nice steady but comfortable pace.

- ❖ 2 months prior to the start of the Trek, introduce some hills into your routine, even walking up and down flights of stairs is a good and very easy way to prepare. As time goes on and you can feel your fitness coming together, try for longer walks, if possible along a beach with some soft sand. Keep this up so that walking 10 to 15 kms does not hurt, well not too much! If you can be comfortable doing that, the jump to 25 kms a day will be pretty easy.
- ❖ A lot of this Trek is in the head and how you approach it is the key Anything is Possible ... take it slow and steady – we have everything planned so you can enjoy yourself.
- ❖ Don't freak yourself out about it, you will be ok, one small step after another.
- ❖ Please make me aware of any problems or concerns as at the end of the day I am sure we can sort things out and remember, if you're having a tough day, there's always a seat in a vehicle.

RED ALERT:

Watch for blisters find the hot spots that rub, use band aids and change socks, get on top of the problem early. Use band aids if a blister even looks like it's developing. The two main blister spots are the feet and the butt. **No rubbing = No blisters.**

WHAT TO BRING

Pack tight and bring only what you need, but don't leave anything behind.

- ❖ Robust main carry bag – maybe a small day bag but sometimes the Camelback doubles for that.
- ❖ One good sleeping bag to minus 10 and if you like, a liner as well.
- ❖ Shoes are to be well worn in. Bring a spare pair and some thongs. DO NOT go and buy a new pair for the trip and start using them 3 days before you come along. Your shoes must feel very comfortable and be well worn in.
- ❖ Walking poles are optional but sometimes very handy.
- ❖ Personal toiletries and medicines.
- ❖ Travel towel, sunscreen and lip balm.
- ❖ One good Camelback or water bottle system – 3 litres should be plenty. The container of the Camelback will fit your food supplies for the day. You won't have to carry very much at all as you walk along.
- ❖ Head Torch with spare batteries and camera with spare batteries – there are some GREAT photos to be taken.

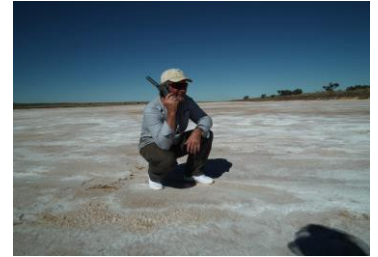
- ❖ Keep it simple when packing clothes:
 - Bike pants and plenty of underwear
 - Two pair of long pants
 - Two or three long sleeve shirts
 - One pair of shorts
 - A very good warm jacket and a good hat
 - Beanie, scarves, gloves and thermal underwear are handy ... it will definitely be cold.
 - Good quality cotton socks. Sometimes it's good to walk with two pairs of socks for blister prevention so bring several pairs of each.
- ❖ If you need any sort of braces – knee, back, ankle, neck, etc please bring them and wear them from the start. This is not a time for any little niggly problems



GENERAL

- ❖ I have a backup crew of 4 to 5 people (including myself) along with three four-wheel drives and a supply trailer.
- ❖ Water is very valuable on a trip like this, so we must use it wisely. Washing of the body in a shower is a no go, but a combination of sponge, wet ones and a towel can be more than enough to keep the body reasonably clean. We will all smell the same anyway!
- ❖ The route we walk is the infamous French Line which can be a four-wheel drive challenge trip, so you have to keep your wits about you as cars get a fair old speed up to clear the big Dunes. They're not there all the time, but they can occasionally appear out of nowhere. I recall on one of my previous hikes, we were standing just on the edge of the track and this small group of cars went by, we waved and smiled as they whizzed past. I always carry a handheld radio and from over the radio of one of the cars came the comment "Who opened the gates to the old peoples home" ...we smiled. 😊
- ❖ If you can play an instrument and would like to bring it along, let me know.

- ❖ As far as group dynamics go and just plain old getting along, this can take some patience and understanding. We are all here to enjoy the journey, quite a few of us will be out of our comfort zone from time to time, so we must be considerate to our fellow walkers.
- ❖ We have Satellite phone connection at all times and we also have access to an R44 helicopter on the eastern side of the Desert that we can call on in emergencies.
- ❖ Personal Insurance is up to you, but as far as medical goes, what you have in your private medical fund should be enough and if needed, the RFDS takes care of getting you to the hospital, and they are outstanding.
- ❖ We will have a Public Liability policy and everyone has to sign an Indemnity Form to participate.
- ❖ Everyone needs to be vaccinated for the trip, getting sick on such a Hike will not be a lot of fun and evacuations, whilst possible, can be tricky and very expensive.
- ❖ Some questions have come to me about how much sand and just how difficult is the walk.



- Let me answer the how difficult question first. Yes, it's a bit of a tough walk, 25km everyday, so maybe I would rate it at a 7 in degree of hardness, but to some it would be a 3 and to others a 10+, the trick is get a little prepared and don't scare yourself too much, you will be ok.
- The sand is not a real issue as it's only on the dunes and the dunes can be a long way in between. Yes, there are a couple of demoralising dunes but best not to look up and take one step at a time. This is not a race and when you get to the top, take a break, have a drink and think "What the Bloody Hell am I doing here" 😊 then walk to the next one. If you're having a tough day there's always a seat in a vehicle.



PAYMENT

- Cost of the Trip is \$5,500.00 with a \$300.00 discount because we are doing it for Jenny's Place = \$5,200.00.
- A deposit of 15% is due when you sign up.
- Final payment is due by end of June.
- Receipts will be emailed.
- Account details are:

Paddy McHugh.com Pty Ltd.
BSB: 014 490 ACC: 417484282